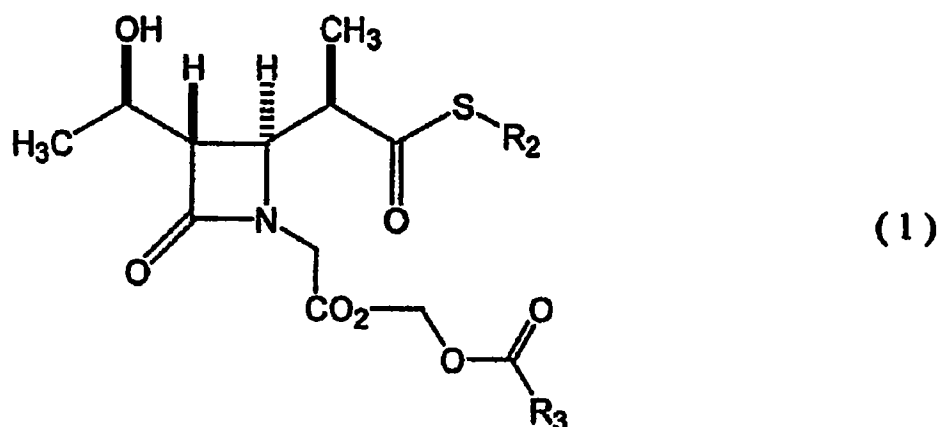


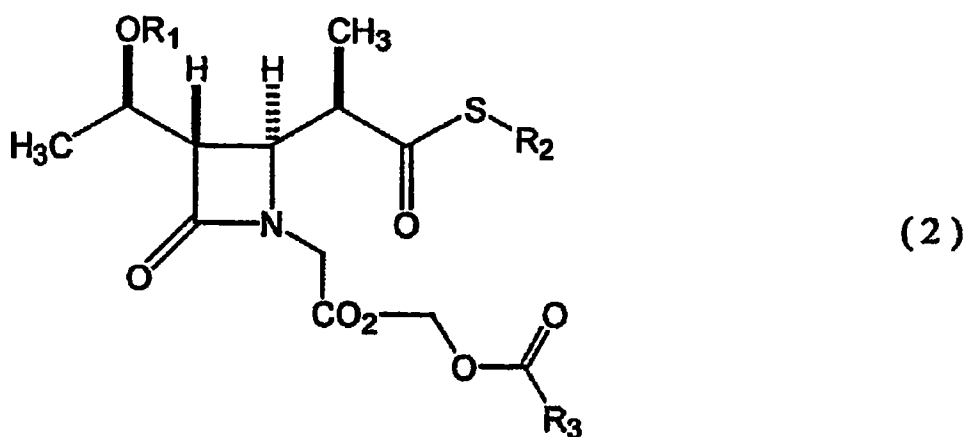
In the Claims:

Please amend Claims 7 and 15. Cancel Claims 11-13. A complete listing of the claims with proper claim identifiers is set forth below.

1. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a β -lactam compound comprising protecting the hydroxyl group of a compound represented by formula (1):

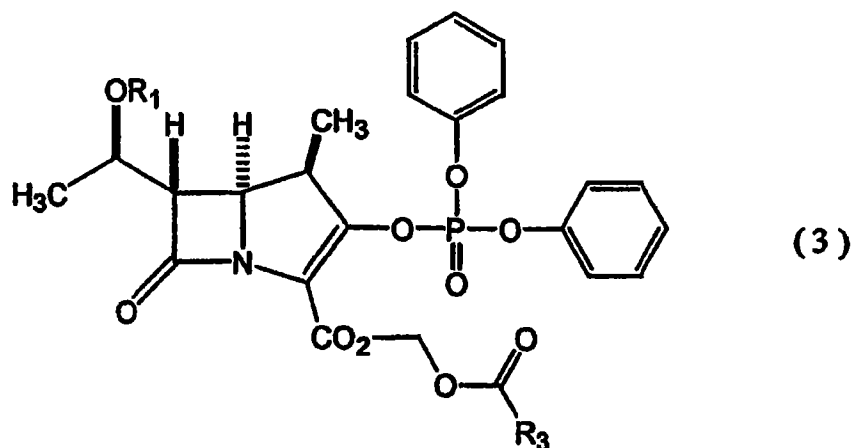


(wherein R_2 represents an aryl group or a heteroaryl group; and R_3 represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms), to produce a compound represented by formula (2):



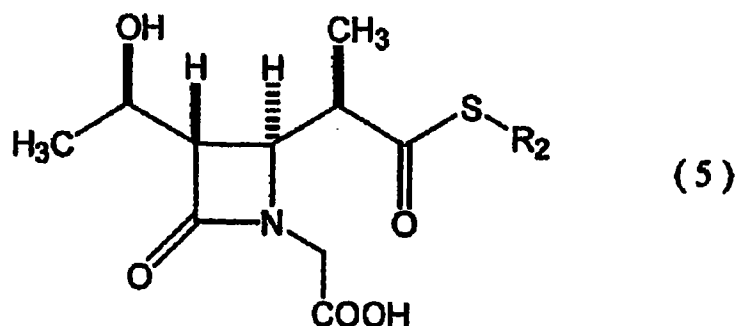
(wherein R_1 represents a trimethylsilyl group or a triethylsilyl group; and R_2 and R_3 are the same as above); cyclizing the compound (2) in the presence of a strong base wherein the strong base is a base selected from the group consisting of an alkali metal alkoxide, an alkali

metal amide, and an alkali metal hydride; and subsequently allowing the cyclized compound to react with diphenylphosphoryl chloride to produce a compound represented by formula (3):

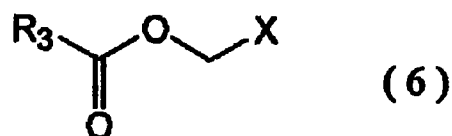


(wherein R₁ and R₃ are the same as above).

2. (Cancelled)
3. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 1, wherein the alkali metal alkoxide is potassium tert-butoxide.
4. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 1, wherein the alkali metal amide is sodium bis(trimethylsilyl) amide.
5. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 1, wherein the alkali metal hydride is sodium hydride.
6. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 1, wherein the compound represented by formula (1) is produced by allowing a compound represented by formula (5):

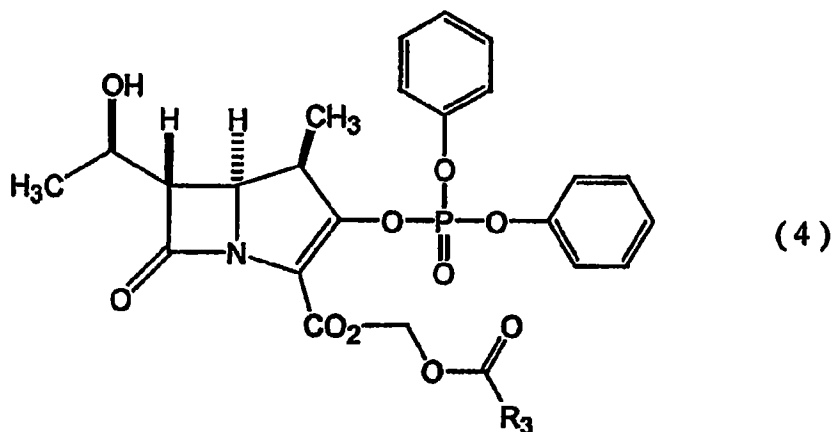


(wherein R_2 represents an aryl group or a heteroaryl group), to react with a compound represented by formula (6):



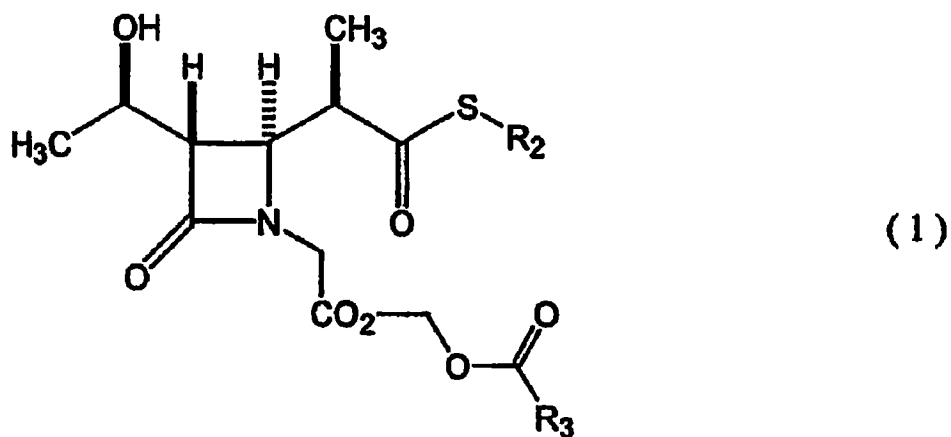
(wherein R_3 represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms; and X represents a halogen atom), in the presence of a base.

7. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a β -lactam compound represented by formula (4):



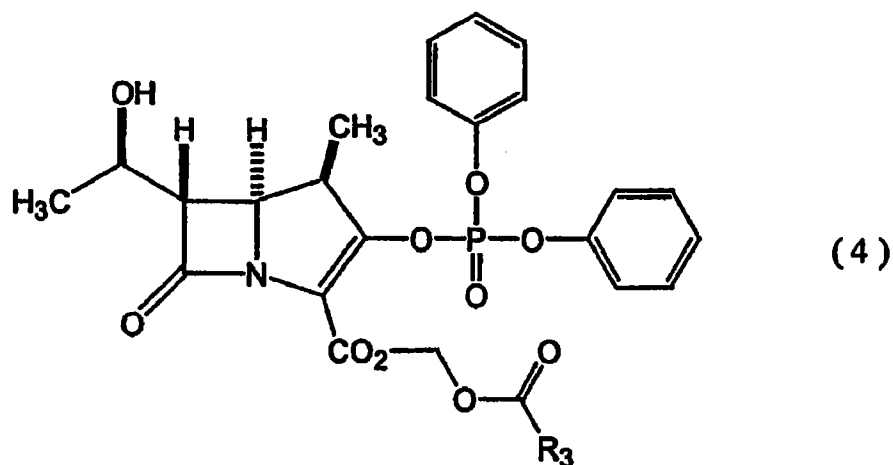
(wherein R_3 represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms), the process comprising deprotecting the hydroxyl moiety of the compound represented by formula (3) produced by the process according to any one of Claims 1 to 61 and 3-6.

8. (Previously Presented) A compound represented by formula (1):



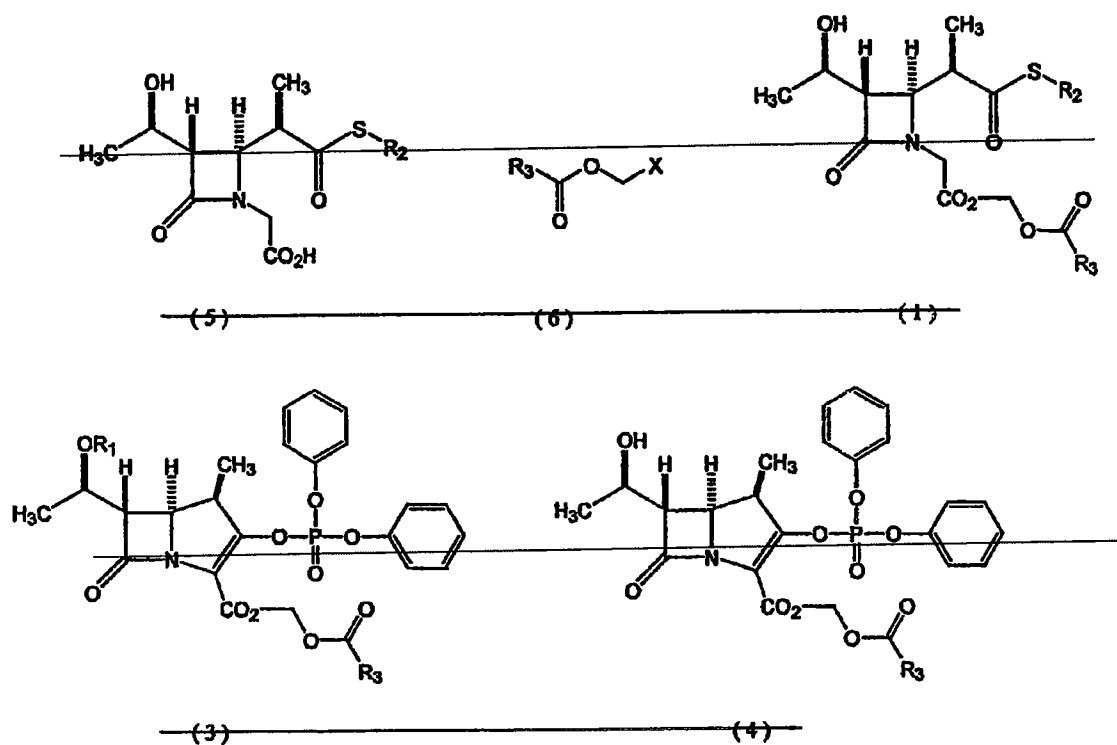
(wherein R_2 represents an aryl group or a heteroaryl group; and R_3 represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms).

9. (Original) The compound according to Claim 8, wherein R_2 is a phenyl group or a p-chlorophenyl group.
10. (Original) The compound according to Claim 8 or 9, wherein R_3 is a tert-butyl group.
11. (Cancelled)
12. (Cancelled)
13. (Cancelled)
14. (Previously Presented) A compound represented by formula (4):



(wherein R_3 represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms).

15. (Currently Amended) The compound according to Claim 14, wherein R_3 is a tert-butyl group.



(In the formulae, R_1 represents a trimethylsilyl group or a triethylsilyl group; R_2 represents an aryl group or a heteroaryl group; R_3 represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms).

~~represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms or a cycloalkyl group having 3 to 10 carbon atoms; and X represents a halogen atom.)~~